REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

OF THE

Boston Training School for Nurses.

1879.

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Treasurer:

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Clerk:

MISS MARY ANNE WALES.

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REPORT.

The Boston Training School for Nurses has now been in operation nearly five years. It was liberally assisted to make a beginning, it has attained a reasonable success, and it seems fit to give an account of our work to those who have helped it and to those who naturally profit by it, and by showing what are our desires and our difficulties, to gain an intelligent comprehension thereof, and, we trust, farther aid from our friends and the public.

There were two doubts in the minds of those who began the Training School: Whether there would be a sufficient number of applicants of a desirable sort; and whether we could find a hospital ready to receive us, where nursing could be taught and practised. We found the number of women who desired to become pupils sufficient at that time, and it has so continued for our increased work. The Massachusetts General Hospital gave its wards gradually into the care of our nurses, and at present the School furnishes nurses for the whole hospital—excepting to one ward. We have also sent out sundry nurses for private nursing. We are sometimes asked, How many first-class nurses can you send out? To which our answer may fairly be, As many as you will send us of first-class women. We have good means of teaching. Members of the hospital staff, both for in-door and out-door patients, have given to our nurses admirable lectures, clear in practical detail, and enabling those among their hearers who are capable of it, to appreciate the general principles which underlie their work. To these gentlemen, and to all who have believed that improvement in the standard of nursing was possible, practicable, and desirable, and who have helped our endeavors toward that end, we offer our hearty thanks. Whatever measure of success we have attained is only an incentive toward farther improvement, and we shall welcome aid and counsel.

Our Superintendent teaches the nurses from the best manuals we can procure, and examines them on the lesson. There are quarterly examinations by the lecturers, and by the medical men among the Directors, and every endeavor is made to detect ignorance or stupidity. The ladies among the Directors divide the duty of knowing and visiting the nurses, that they may be informed as to their capacities and constitution—physical and mental.

The nurses come to the hospital for a course of two years. This time is spent partly in medical and partly in surgical nursing; each nurse takes her turn of night duty, and by a valued arrangement with the Lying-in Hospital, each nurse has an opportunity of working there for two months. Dr. C. J. Blake most kindly permitted several of our nurses to come to him at appointed hours, that they might see something of what is required in troubles of the ear.

Nursing must be learned at the bedside, and at the bedside of hospital patients, accuracy, fidelity to instruction, and skilful manipulation may be learned, so that these may be fairly required of our graduates. If they possess in addition to good character, tact and decision, they go armed at all points to their first private patient; but those whose first duty in the hospital is implicit obedience and subordination can hardly be expected at once to develop a spirit of resource and clever suggestion. We ask of the public to have patience with our nurses during their first year's work, and to recognize that they are to require from them trustworthiness and fidelity to essentials rather than, at first, the delicacy and refinement which are the *fine fleur* of nursing. If a nurse is incapable of acquiring these also, she will never have the success which is possible; but at the time of graduation she has no opportunity of testing their possession, and they are not always innate.

With all the care that we can take, the pupils sometimes come near to the time of graduating before we are clearly convinced of their deficiency in one or another qualification which we consider essential. In such cases we withhold the diploma, and we hope that physicians and others employing our nurses will ask for their diploma. No woman whom we are willing to endorse will be without it. We give, at the

end of this Report, a list of the nurses who have been graduated from the school, and it is proposed to send out, at intervals, a printed list of the names of the nurses to whom the diploma is given. As some of the nurses who have not received a diploma, print upon their cards, "From the Training School at the Massachusetts General Hospital," it seems best to take pains to aid the public in discriminating between those whom we mark satisfactory or otherwise. So much in explanation; and it is but fair to say, on the other hand, that both in the hospital and outside, we see, with the greatest pleasure, the good character, fidelity, and intelligence of the women who come to the school, and we have the best testimony to their good work. Dr. Minot says: "I always recommend my patients to procure, if possible, the services of one of the nurses who have graduated from our Training School; they are far more efficient and acceptable than any others."

The thirty-nine nurses on the printed list, and forty-eight in the service of the hospital, represent the result of one hundred and five persons who have entered the school. Sixteen of these left during the month of probation, thirteen have been dismissed; while deficient health, intention of marriage, indecision, and inefficiency account for the balance. Applications for admission continue to be sufficient in number, and there has been, since the beginning, a marked improvement in the average quality of the applicants, while some of the best nurses are among the earlier pupils.

It is sometimes supposed that the adoption of nurses from our school by the hospital, precludes any further need of money for its use. This is not so; our monthly expenses, though not very large, are continuous, and we earnestly hope that if our work is approved and our graduates do themselves credit we may come to be endowed with money sufficient to carry out our plans in the best way. Our subscribers are not many, and income from subscription is always fluctuating. We should be thankful to establish a nurse's home, where the nurses could live when not on duty. The hospital accommodations are limited; they cannot give us a nurse's sitting-room or separate bed-rooms, and our graduates are scattered the moment they leave the school. If we could provide a

home, where the nurses serving in the hospital could live when off duty; where the night watchers could have their daylight sleep under favorable circumstances, and to which our graduates could return in the intervals between their cases, we could better provide the most favorable conditions, and could more satisfactorily influence and control our nurses. The annual report of the Training School for Nurses in New York says: "The founders of the school were impressed from the beginning with the importance of giving the nurses a home; not a mere lodging, but a comfortable home, where after their daily labors they may find relaxation and rest, free from the depressing influences of the hospital," and adds that "there is no doubt that the unusual exemption from illness which the nurses have enjoyed is largely owing to their cheerful and healthy surroundings," &c. After using neighboring houses, more or less suitable for the purpose, the New York School has this year received the gift of a house for a term of years, so arranged as to be "a complete and beautiful home for sixty nurses and the necessary servants." If we had such a home we could do what we should gladly arrange for — send out nurses among the poor. There are women just fitted for such work, if they could have their hands strengthened by encouragement and such assistance as a good home gives, and it would be a great satisfaction to make such work possible. It is from the ablest physicians that we learn what share good nursing has in the cure of many diseases, and we would gladly put this agency at the service of the poor.

While urging our wants we do not forget our benefactors. Those who gave us money at first, to try an experiment, deserve grateful remembrance while the School lasts; and we have received during the last year five thousand dollars from the executors of the late Augustus Hemenway's estate. Owing to the wording of the form of gift, the money does not come into our hands as a lump sum. We therefore lay aside our other small possessions as the beginning of a fund, and use this bequest for our daily needs. We were incorporated under the name of the "Boston Training School for Nurses," March 17th, 1875. We claim to be careful and economical in expenditure, and we are confident that when the knowledge of our work and our wants has entered into the thoughts of

the bountiful givers who mean that Boston shall not be backward in any good thing, we shall be helped in a work which necessarily makes no show, but whose results may at any time deal with the vital question of our own lives or of those dearer than our own.

It may be added that, up to November, 1878, there have been forty graduates from the School, some of whom are holding the responsible position of head-nurses at the hospital, while many others are constantly engaged in their calling in our community and the vicinity.

LIST OF GRADUATES.

Miss Ida F. Arnold.
Miss Emma Barnes.
Miss Effie J. Batchelder.
Miss Lueretia L. Brigham.
Miss Emma Brown.
Miss Ida M. Bruce.
Mrs. Martha A. Clark.
Miss Sarah Cowling.
Miss M. Adeline Davis.
Miss Mary E. P. Davis.
Miss Alice M. Dane.
Miss Katherine L. Doyle.
Miss Damie Duff.
Miss Alice E. Emerson.
Miss Luthera Emerson.
Miss Clementina Foss.
Miss Electa Foster.
Miss E. Sophia Freeman.
Miss Elizabeth Gilliland.
Miss Sarah Gleason.
Miss Emma F. Goodnow.
Miss Caroline Gordon.
Mrs. Mary Ann Kelley.
Mrs. Jane Cray Mansfield.
Miss Isabella McMillan.
Miss Seretha Miller.
Mrs. Elizabeth B. Monson.
Mrs. Frances A. Moore.
Miss Nettie A. Moorhead.
Miss Flora B. Page.
Miss Sophia F. Palmer.
Miss Georgiana D. Read.
Miss Margaret Russell.
Miss Jane A. Seaman.
Miss Emma M. Sinclair.
Miss Sarah O. Scranton
Miss Christine M. Smith.
Miss Eliza M. Wood.
Miss Amelia E. Wright.